Classroom Management Plan

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Abstract

This classroom management plan will discuss my beliefs as a classroom teacher as I begin my career in education. The plan includes thoughts from philosophers in the field of education such as Ginott, Glasser, Kohn, and Kounin. Also included are some personal thoughts and experiences that have shaped my personal philosophy. All of these different thoughts and ideologies have culminated in order to form what is the very beginning of my classroom management philosophy. The developments I have made thus far tend to make me a relaxed
yet firm professional in my field. This meaning that I have a great deal of consistency along with
a fair and equal subjectivism when required by circumstance. All of the ideas brought forth in
this plan have influenced me into the teacher I will become in regards to the way my classroom
is managed. The effects of Ginott, Glasser, Kohn, and Kounin have been very influential on my
very young teaching career, which is ever expanding.

I. Philosophy of Classroom Management

My philosophy of classroom management is quite hazy at this very early point in my
teaching career. It could be best described as unfinished work. I have not had a chance to do
much more than observe within a classroom up to this point. However, I have been able to
develop a foundation for my beliefs when it comes to classroom management. As my teaching
career progresses and I continue to grow as an educator I suspect that I will also learn to more
efficiently manage my classroom. This philosophy is just the very beginning of what will someday be a perfected philosophy.

When the topic of classroom management comes up, one particular theme comes to mind, that theme is communication. Communication is such a vital part in all walks of life, not only in the classroom. This is why it should be one of the most important aspects in the classroom, because it is very applicable to the real world. Haim Ginott addressed this idea of communication within the classroom within his beliefs on classroom management. Ginott came up with a theory called “Congruent Communication”, this theory essentially states that educators should deal with students in a non-aggressive manner (Classroom Management and Discipline). Ginott not only focused on good communication between teachers and students, but also a positive atmosphere in order to promote good classroom discipline. Ginott had four axioms that were a culmination of his beliefs. The first, learning always takes place in the present tense. This suggests that teachers must neither prejudge students nor hold grudges against them for previous misbehaviors. The effective teacher should correct students by directing them to proper behavior examples. The second axiom, teachers should always be respectful of student needs. Students should never experience any teacher belittling them. Thirdly, if teachers want civil behavior, they should model it for students. Finally, one of the best ways to improve student behavior is for the teacher to actively confer dignity on the students. These are all very powerful and put down a great foundation in constructing my classroom philosophy. Discussing them individually and more extensively will do a great deal for furthering an understanding of that philosophy.
The first saying that deals with learning always takes place in the present tense is very important. Teachers sometimes may hear things via rumors and other unreliable mills, but as an educator all students should have an equal opportunity in our classrooms (Classroom Management and Discipline). As an educator I believe that everyday is a new day and a fresh start for both the teacher and the student. If a student believes that a teacher already has it out for him/her before they even set foot in the classroom it is my belief that the student will have already shut down and not apply themselves as they normally could. This fits with my personality because like everyone, I have bad days, and I don’t think a student should be looked down upon forever just because they had one off day and acted up. The second saying covers teachers being aware of student’s needs, and a student never being belittled (Classroom Management and Discipline). I believe that when an adult belittles an adolescent it is simply an act of someone who is taking advantage of his or her power. As an educator this is very hard to do, as you obviously deal with younger people on a daily basis, it is your job. I believe you have to be very conscious of this and you must do so by being positive in your classroom. I cannot even count the times that I saw a teacher act as a classroom dictator. Do not mistake that the teacher shouldn’t have any power; it should be known that the teacher is the person in charge in the classroom. The teachers that do hold the title over their student’s heads are educators that do not get the best out of all their students, they will inevitably have students who do not like them because of their dictator role. This sort of attitude of dictator does not fit my personality at all; I am a very outgoing and personable guy. I would never hold anything over my student’s; my goal is to be an advocate for their success in the classroom. The third axiom deals with acting, as you want your students to act (Classroom Management and Discipline). I
think this saying goes without explanation; you have to behave in a way that you would want your students to act. Just because you are the teacher you cannot get away with doing things you wouldn’t want your students to be doing. For example, if you don’t let your students to have drinks in class, then you don’t have one either. I am from the beliefs that if a fifteen-year-old student can wait until passing period to have a drink of water, so can a teacher. It is my understanding that being a student is about discipline, making sure that you keep yourself on track while also following those who are models for you. As a teacher it is your job to be a role model in all aspects whether it be a small thing such as drinks in class all the way up to being prepared and having your act together as a teacher. The final saying deals with awarding the students with a sense of pride (Classroom Management and Discipline). As a student in the past I always looked forward to going to classes that I felt I was valued in. It goes back to belittling a student, if you make that student feel valued instead of worthless every time they speak they are much more likely stay engaged in your classroom. Some students may have never gotten the opportunity to have an adult think highly of their opinion, but if you as an educator can value their opinion and make it a productive part of your class, you have helped that student in a great way. All of these axioms are what makes up my beliefs as a teacher among other theories, which I will discuss.

Behind Ginott, the philosophy I relate myself with the most is that of Jacob Kounin. Kounin’s theory has a list of key idea that he believes promotes good classroom behavior. The list is as follows: 1) When teachers correct misbehaviors in one student, it often influences the behavior of nearby students. This is known as the ripple effect. 2) Teachers should know what is going on in all parts of the classroom at all times. Kounin called this awareness, ‘withitness’. 3)
The ability to provide smooth transitions between activities, and to maintain consistent momentum within activities is crucial to effective group management. 4) Teachers should strive to maintain group alertness and to hold every group member accountable for the content of a lesson, which allows optimal learning to occur. 5) Student satiation (boredom) can be avoided by providing a feeling of progress and by adding variety to curriculum and classroom environment (TeacherMatters). I really like the way Kounin addresses the classroom management avenue because he covers the aspect of keeping your students on track. This is very difficult to do if you aren’t well prepared in your transitions and if you are not aware of your surroundings in your classroom. To break it down, Kounin’s basic philosophy is to be prepared, which I agree with.

Students are thought to learn better if they are provided things that they need, these include five basic needs, survival, belonging, power, fun, and freedom. Those according to William Glasser are the keys to good behavior in a classroom (Glasser Theory 2011). I agree with Glasser’s views in most aspects such as survival, belonging, fun, and freedom. I agree because I believe those mentioned are all tools that are keys to success in a classroom, not only good behavior. A student must know he or she can survive, they must know they are welcome and belong in your classroom, the student must look forward to the fun yet content based activities in your classroom, and the student must also not feel too restricted in your classroom, they must have freedom. I do not agree with Glasser in the sense that the student should have a substantial sense of power in your classroom. I believe the student should have some freedoms, but the student should not feel the need for power, as you provide the structure therefore holding the power, but you give your students freedom within that power.
Supplementing Glasser’s idea of student needs, with the communication point Ginott makes are good building blocks for classroom philosophy.

The final theorist that I tend to side with is Alfie Kohn. Kohn’s approach in a modern day classroom was one that had an entire student focus. This idea would have a classroom that is driven by the students doing a great deal of group work and collaboration, while using a variety of materials to do so (21st Century Classroom). I like this idea because it gives the students the freedom to choose what parts of specific topics they want to dig deeper on. For example if your class was covering progressivism, some students may be more interested in the reforms of the executive branch, where as others may want to pursue a legislative branch emphasis. Under Kohn’s ideology this would be all right as long as the standards are being covered. It also ties in with all the other philosophers that I have already discussed. It gives students a sense of belonging because their opinion of what they want to learn is valued. The students also get their sense of freedom here as well by being able to pick in some situation the concentration of the course. As a student, I always enjoyed the classes that were student directed the most. It was interesting and it also held us, as students accountable to participate because we said we were interested in the topic, so we had to actually show that we were.

All of these theorists provide at least a piece of the puzzle that is my classroom management philosophy. I may agree with some more than others, but they all provide useful insight to those of us who have yet to spend an enormous amount of time in the classroom. In summarizing my management philosophy I would say it is simple. Be relaxed, be consistent, and be positive; those three things are at the core of what I feel my ever-changing classroom
management philosophy is. I hope to soon develop a deeper understanding of the practicality that these philosophers will provide in my classroom so I can incorporate their knowledge.

References:


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